

# Central Khammouan Limestone

Criteria: A1 &amp; A2

**Province(s):** Khammouan **Latitude:** 17°50'N  
**Protected area:** Khammouan Limestone NPA **Longitude:** 104°45'E  
**Area:** 79,000 ha

## General description

The IBA is situated inside Khammouan Limestone (Phou Hinboun) National Protected Area, in central Lao P.D.R. The IBA comprises a large, representative section of the national protected area. The north-west and south of the IBA are dominated by sparsely vegetated limestone karst, while the centre comprises an area of semi-evergreen forest and mixed deciduous forest on non-calcareous substrate, referred to as the 'central forest area' (Timmins 1997, Thewlis *et al.* 1998). The IBA was defined principally for Sooty Babbler *Stachyris herberti*, a species endemic to limestone areas in central Lao P.D.R. and central Vietnam. The IBA is expected to support a large population of this species. In addition, the IBA supports a form of leaf warbler *Phylloscopus* sp., which may represent an undescribed taxon, with a similar range to Sooty Babbler (P. Alström in litt. to Duckworth *et al.* 1998). Furthermore, the IBA supports populations of a number of globally threatened primates, most notably a taxon of Francois's Langur *Semnopithecus francoisi* endemic to Lao P.D.R. (Duckworth *et al.* 1999).

## Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT		One bird was seen in secondary forest in the central forest area in February 1996 (Timmins 1997, Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
Sooty Babbler <i>Stachyris herberti</i>	A1, A2	NT		Three groups were seen on fairly open vegetated karst between 280 and 480 m asl close to Ban Vangdao in May 1995 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of high national and global significance.

**Biome-restricted species:** The site is not known to qualify under criterion A3 (Timmins 1997). See Appendix 3 for details.

## Threats to biodiversity

The major threats to biodiversity at the IBA are hunting, and habitat degradation, through firewood collection, burning and grazing of domestic livestock (Timmins 1997). However, neither Sooty Babbler nor the undescribed form of leaf warbler is threatened by hunting, and, given the low likelihood of wholesale loss of limestone karst habitat, neither is particularly threatened by habitat loss. Therefore, while Central Khammouan Limestone qualifies as an IBA, intensive management is probably not necessary to protect the populations of key bird species. Rather, conservation priorities within Khammouan Limestone National Protected Area should be set based on taxa more threatened by human activities, such as certain large mammals, including Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* and Gaur *Bos gaurus*. In addition, as the global conservation status of several primate taxa, notably the endemic taxon of Francois's Langur, may worsen as populations decline in Vietnam, addressing hunting within the national protected area is a high priority.

## References

- Duckworth, J. W., Salter, R. E. and Khounbolin, K. eds. (1999) *Wildlife in Lao P.D.R.: 1999 status report*. Vientiane: IUCN, WCS and CPAWM.
- Duckworth, J. W., Tizard, R. J., Timmins, R. J., Thewlis, R. M., Robichaud, W. B. and Evans, T. D. (1998) Bird records from Laos, October 1994-August 1995. *Forktail* 13: 33-68 (including errata sheet distributed with *Forktail* 14).
- Thewlis, R. M., Timmins, R. J., Evans, T. D. and Duckworth, J. W. (1998) The conservation status of birds in Laos: a review of key species. *Bird Conserv. Internat.* 8(suppl.): 1-159.
- Timmins, R. J. (1997) *Notes on wildlife and habitats in Khammouan Limestone National Conservation Area, Khammouan province, Lao P.D.R.* Vientiane: CPAWM/WCS.